

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2013

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing in support of the application submitted by the Jornada Experimental Range in Las Cruces, New Mexico, to be one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's regional hubs to provide climate change information to farmers, ranchers, and forest land owners. We urge you to consider the Jornada Experimental Range to be the Southwest Regional Hub, which covers at least three major deserts (Chihuahuan, Sonoran, and Mojave) as well as major mountain ranges of the western U.S., and significant river basins like the Rio Grande, Colorado River, and Gila River.

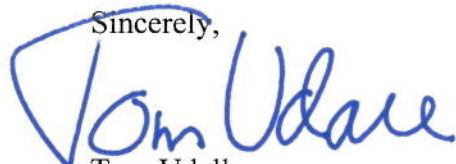
New Mexico is home to extensive agricultural development, a large grazing industry, and high-elevation forest resources. In this area of the country, water demand has already exceeded water availability. This area has also experienced warming temperatures, long-term droughts, and other extreme weather events. Regional hubs can provide scientific information on climate change to land managers which is useful in coping with climate change effects.

Las Cruces is an ideal site for this regional hub. Several U.S. Department of Agriculture facilities are located in Las Cruces along with the New Mexico State University. In addition there are numerous USDA offices throughout the state as well as the nearby resources of New Mexico Tech and the University of New Mexico.

Established in 1912, USDA's Jornada Experimental Range has a long history of working with ranching and agricultural producers. Climate change and its effects on water resources have been evaluated using climate model outputs as inputs to hydrologic models. Because of the very relevant research ongoing in New Mexico and Las Cruces in particular, we urge you to consider Las Cruces as the regional hub location and a center of excellence for understanding of climate change and transfer of technology to the user community.

We urge your thoughtful consideration of this application within your agency's guidelines, and we ask to be kept apprised of its progress.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator